

### CHAPTER - III

#### AMBIGUITY OF THE THIRD TYPE

The third type mainly concentrates on the literary devices such as pun, allegory, conceit and comparison. These are the aspects of this type. Empson defines this type as, " a verbal matter, occurs when two ideas, which are connected only, by being both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simultaneously."<sup>1</sup> The definition clearly indicates that the ideas connected must be relevant in the context, and ultimately pun, comparison, conceit, allegory all these literary devices express ideas more than one, they are always relevant in that context when we try to interpret. The examples of the said devices used by the poet or the author we are conscious about the another meaning expressed by them. Here, Empson states that, some such word that expresses two relevant ideas at a time and the reader apprehends both meanings while reading the lines of the poem.

The following example, is proper to express Empson's concept of this type clearly.

' That spacious monster, my accomplished share .'

Empson discusses this line in the light of the definition stated above. He points out that there are two pieces of information, two parts of narrative. There is a sharpness of distinction between the two meanings. Because the line is uttered by Samson to express his hatred and grievances against Delilah. The words, 'Spacious', 'Monster' and 'accomplishment', have two distinct meanings. Empson quotes the meanings from the notes given in the original text. These meanings are, 'Spacious' means 'beautiful and deceitful', 'Monster', 'something unnatural and something striking, shown as the sign of disaster'; 'accomplished', 'Skilled in the art of blandishment and successful in undoing her husband.'<sup>2</sup> To interpret this line we can take the first meaning which is obvious that Delilah is beautiful and striking that her art to praise in soft words is like a snare. This can be taken as the compliment paid by Samson to Delilah's beauty. Whereas it is a pun and the statement gives us another meaning that she is deceitful, she is like a sign of disaster and is very skilful in undoing her husband and hence the words uttered by Samson is the spontaneous outburst of his anger that expresses his hatred and grievances. The pun is obvious here and poet is successful to bring these two distinct meanings together. The meanings stated above are relevant in the context and are expressed simultaneously.

But soon he found  
 The Wellkin pitched with clouds around,  
 An Eastern Wind and Dew upon the ground.

- DRYDEN.

Empson calls this 'full blown pun',<sup>3</sup> because any justification is not required by this pun it is clear and the two meanings as conceived by the poet are easily understood by the reader. The lines describe the situation that the clouds are gathered in the sky and the eastern wind started to blow, dew drops are on the ground, the sky is becoming darker and darker; a suggestion of coming rain. Empson states that the word 'pitched' means both 'blackened as with pitch by thunder clouds' and 'pitched like a tent'.<sup>4</sup> Because tents are generally tarred and blackened to keep out rain. Here these two meanings act upon one another. The reader is aware of these two meanings without any derivation and hence it is 'full blown pun'. The Restoration poets generally used this type of pun in their poetry.

Let such raise palaces, and manors buy,  
 Collect a tax, or farm a lottery;  
 With warbling eunuchs fill a licensed stage,  
 And lull to servitude a thoughtless age.

- Johnson, 'London'

While describing contemporary London and the situation of the state Johnson writes with ironic tone. There is a pun on the word Licensed; Empson points out that there are two meanings, the passing of Licening Act and the other meaning is having no regard for law, free and candid in behaviour. The later meaning is immediately noted by the reader. The example cited above shows us how this single word gives us two distinct meanings simultaneously and bring us two pieces of information.

The watchful guests still hint the last offence,  
The daughter's petulance, the son's expense;  
Improve his heady rage with treacherous skill,  
And mould his passions till they make his will.

- Johnson, 'The Vanity of Human Wishes.'

Empson calls this a 'careful and conscious pun'.<sup>5</sup> The word 'heady' and 'will' give two different meanings. The word 'heady' suggests two meanings one is, that he was the head of the family and another that his passions come soon to head.<sup>6</sup> 'Will' means his desire and his testament. Empson calls that, "eighteenth Century use of pun is always worldly"; and further he points out that when subject is difficult to conceive poetically wit is employed by the eighteenth century writers.<sup>7</sup>

Empson explains general ambiguity of the third type as

An ambiguity of third type, then as a matter conceiving whole state of mind, occurs when what is said is valid in, refers to several different topics, several universes of discourse, several modes of judgement or feelings. 8

This type of ambiguity can be constructed by two ways by making a statement and imply it with relevant situation; as it is in allegory where many interpretations are possible; another, to describe two situations and leave the reader to conceive many things about ~~the both~~; as in ornamental comparison.<sup>9</sup>

The objection is raised by the critics that pun is not in itself an ambiguity. Empson justifies his point by giving psychological explanation; he states,

The mind has compartments holding opinions and modes of judgments which conflict when they come together; that, in fact, is why they are separated; compartments therefore, which require attention and one is particularly conscious of anything that mixes them up. If the two spheres of action of generalisation, or the two halves of an ornamental comparison, involve two such compartments which must be thought of in two ways, we have the conditions for a general ambiguity of the third type .10

I gave to Hope a watch of mine: but he  
 An anchor gave to me.  
 Then an old prayer-book I did present :  
 And he an optick sent.  
 With that I gave a viall full of tears :  
 But he a few green eares :  
 Ah, Loyterer ! I'le no more, no more I'le bring  
 I did expect a ring.

- Herbert, 'The Temple'

The yearning of the soul for the union with the God is expressed in these lines by the poet. The poem is soul's irritation and despondency at the slowness with which it can achieve perfect union with God. Empson states this theme in his interpretation. Here he chiefly concentrates on the symbols in the poem; in his fairly long interpretation of the poem he points out various symbols, and states how these symbols express two different meanings or how they give two distinct pieces of narration. As the every symbol in the poem has more than one meaning, Empson interpretes almost six symbols - watch, anchor, prayer-book, optick, green ears, ring. Watch suggests brevity of human life; and the length of the time already spent in waiting; the anchor suggests the hope of resurrection and power of endurance; Prayer-book suggests a prayer and an ordered rule of life; optick suggests the faith that can look

up to the sky, or the mystical event of a faint illumination and distant view of Heaven, Vaill suggests a mark of repentance or the pain of desiring perfect union with God, or the pain of desiring what has been renounced for Him, the 'green ears' suggests faint signs of spiritual growth or mystical achievement; the ring suggests omega, the perfect figure of heaven or of eternity, marriage with God or a halo.<sup>11</sup> Further Empson points out that prayer-book as containing marriage service and a ring as a sexual symbol; or the life of secular ambition.<sup>12</sup> Thus symbols used by Herbert in his poem are important and they can be included in this type, because they express different meanings.

Along with pun and symbols Empson includes the seventeenth century conceits in this type. because like symbols conceits also play an important role to suggest different meaning to the poem.

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love ?  
 What sailors ships have my sighs drowned ?  
 Who says my tears have overflowed his ground ?  
 When did the heats that my veins fill  
 Add one more to the plaguey Bill ?  
 Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still  
 Litigious men, that quarrels move,  
 Though she and I do love.

- John Donne 'The Cononization.'



The poem is a kind of dramatic monologue.<sup>13</sup>

Here the "you" whom the speaker addresses is not identified, it may be a friend who is objecting to the speaker's love affair and the practical world which regards love as a silly affectation.<sup>14</sup>

The speaker says that none is harmed by his love-making, his sighs have not drowned any merchantship, His tears have not caused any floods or heat of his passion has not harmed anybody. The Soldiers continue to fight wars and lawyers are busy with their law suits. In short " his passions are personal and private they do not have any effect on the public domain."<sup>15</sup>

Empson states "that almost any seventeenth century conceit could be included in the third type".<sup>16</sup> They achieve different meaning and express two distinct worlds. Cleanth Brooks points out the same idea stated by Empson in his analysis. Brooks writes

.....the wind of lover's sighs, the floods, of lovers' tears etc. extravagant figures with which the contemptuous secular friend might be expected to tease the lovers.....The very absurdity of the jargon which lovers are expected to talk makes for his argument : their love, however absurd it may appear to the world, does no harm to the world. The practical friend need have no fears:there will still be war to fight and law suits to argue .<sup>17</sup>



In the poem Donne contrasts two worlds - one is of profane love and another is of divine love. "The basic metaphor which underlies the poem and which is reflected in the title involves a sort of paradox".<sup>18</sup> Here poet treats profane love as if it were a divine love.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. William Empson : The Seven Types ... P.102.
2. Ibid. PP.102-03.
3. Ibid. P.107.
4. Ibid. P.106.
5. Ibid. P.108.
6. Ibid. P.108.
7. Ibid. P.108-109.
8. Ibid. P.111.
9. Ibid. PP.111-112.
10. Ibid. P.114.
11. Ibid. P.119-20.
12. Ibid. P.120.
13. Cleanth Brooks and R.P.Warren,  
Understanding Poetry,  
(Holt-Saunders Japan : 1938, Rpt 1985) P.136.

14. Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn  
(Methuen : London : 1960) P.8.
15. Brooks and Waryen, Understanding Poetry, P.136.
16. William Empson : Seven Types P.124.
17. Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn, P.9.
18. Ibid. P.7.
19. William Empson : Seven Types....P.130.

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